

Message Text

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46

ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CCO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USSS-00 /031 W

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O 041405Z NOV 73

FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5378

INFO USDEL RIYADH IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L JIDDA 4877

EXDIS

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP, SA

SUBJECT: SECVISIT - RIYADH

1. ROYAL DIWAN, IN ITS MOST TACTFUL MANNER, HAS RAISED WITH EMBASSY PROBLEM DIWAN ENCOUNTERED DURING LAST HIGH-LEVEL U.S. VISIT TO SAUDI ARABIA, THAT OF V.P. AGNEW IN 1971. DIWAN NOTED THAT UPON DEPARTURE OF VICE PRESIDENT'S PARTY FOR AIRPORT CONSIDERABLE MONOGRAMMED SILVER, CHINA, GLASSWARE AND VARIOUS BIBELOTS WERE MISSING FROM GUEST PALACE AND OTHER QUARTERS. AT TIME, DIWAN WAS FORCED TO ASK OFFICAL PARTY (ESPECIALLY MEMBERS OF THE PRESS) TO GO THROUGH THEIR EFFECTS IN ORDER TO RETURN ANY SUCH ITEMS THAT MIGHT "INADVERTENTLY" HAVE GOTTEN INTO THEIR BAGGAGE. WE UNDERSTAND MANY, BUT NOT ALL, OF MISSING OBJECTS WERE RECOVERED.

2. SAUDI ARABIA IS STILL A VERY TRADITIONAL MUSLIM COUNTRY, AND IMPACT OF SUCH PETTY THEFTS IS GREATER THAN IT WOULD BE ELSEWHERE (A THIEF WHO IS A TWO OR THREE-TIME LOSER IN SAUDI ARABIA HAS HIS LIMBS LOPPED OFF, STARTING WITH RIGHT HAND, FOR EACH SUCCESSIVE ARREST).

3. WE HOPE THEREFORE THAT ANY SOUVENIR HUNTERS IN SECRETARY'S PARTY MIGHT CONFINE THEIR ACTIVITIES TO SHOPPING TRIPS THROUGH THE SUQ.

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